

# LIFE AT COURT IN THE EARLY VICTORIAN DAYS

## Letters of Sarah Spencer, Lady Lytton, Tell of What She Saw Behind the Scenes

By JEANNETTE L. GILDER.

I HAVE just been reading the correspondence of Sarah Spencer, Lady Lytton, edited by her granddaughter, the Hon. Mrs. Hugh Lytton (Scribner), and I have found a most fascinating book. One cannot wonder if any of the men and women living to-day will hand down interesting letters and diaries to future generations as the early Victorians have handed down to us.

Lady Lytton was the elder daughter of George John, second Earl Spencer, by his wife, Lavinia, eldest daughter of the Earl of Devon. Lord Spencer was a man of peculiar personal charm. Gibbon wrote of him: "He is a valuable man, I when he is familiar a pleasant companion." Lady Spencer was a famous beauty and her portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds were well known. She was an intrepid fiery partisan and a woman of plain speech.

"I do not like my Aunt Spencer," observed one of her nieces. "I object to being called 'Dare Devil' when she is a good temper and sworn at when she is not."

Lady Spencer was clever with her pen, as her caricatures will prove. There are two charming drawings of her by Sarah as a child.

Lady Sarah fell in love with and subsequently married William Henry Lytton, an older man, after whose death, in 1838, she became lady in waiting to Queen Victoria, then in the second year of her reign. In 1842 she was made governess of the royal children. Lady Lytton died in 1870 at the age of 82.

All of Lady Lytton's letters are interesting, but those written while she was at Windsor and Buckingham Palace of the greatest general value.

Lady Sarah's recollections go much further back than Victoria's reign, for she writes from personal knowledge of the coronation of George IV, and the extraordinary behavior of Queen Caroline, who insisted upon being crowned also. She presented herself at the doors of Westminster Abbey, but was refused admission.

There is Lady Lytton's first day at Windsor, where she was installed as lady in waiting to Queen Victoria.

To begin at the end, I am more comfortable than yesterday, had a wretched cold of a morning at the inn, which was so long ago that I can hardly bring it to mind. Then arrived and found me, De Lehen very kind and helpful. Then was shown up a long winding staircase to my room, an apartment which certainly, if apartments could faire le bonheur, would make any lady happy.

The wind is whistling round the old walls and the sun brilliant; it is beautiful. I went down to luncheon with all the lords and ladies, and then the Queen appeared and I had my emerald and followed her to her carriage, where she and the Duchess of Kent and Lady Mary Stopford (a nice little red old maid, quite a fixture at court) drove off at a great rate to pay morning visit to the Duchess of Gloucester at Bagshot.

I had sundry things to carry and my nonsense to do; blundered and gaped as usual. The Queen is perfectly kind and civil and good natured.

First, however, the restraint and peculiar frame of society here was very agreeable to me, but I have I think got into it and feel settled into a proper dress.

The Duchess of Gloucester was delightful and it was a pleasant visit. The Duke of Cambridge staying there. There is such heartiness and seemingly endless good temper about all the royal family to judge from manner and look, as nice to see them. We of the household stayed in one room, while the Queen with her family in another, and stayed long and sang to them and read quite snug.

On our drive home she read a lesson book, "Sir Robert Walpole's Life," by a very attentive and goodly to herself a pleasant thing, as it saves conversation. Duchess of Kent struggling with sleep, but not quite conquered.

It seems that Queen Victoria, though frequently said "ain't," did not pronounce other words as was common among the educated people of her early days. We have Lady Lytton's word for this.

The Queen says "gold" open, not "gold"; also "Rome" open, not "room"; "Prussia" in my way (she was ac-

customed in childhood to the other way), rhyming to Russia, in spite of the Dean of Chester. When she became Queen being very anxious to pronounce right, she asked the Ministers about the word, and they decided in my way, the Duke of Wellington also; and her Majesty complied. She is particularly pleased at being reckoned an authority about accent and takes great pains about it.

It was one of Lady Lytton's duties to attend the Queen when she prorogued Parliament.

"My duties," writes Lady Lytton, "turned out unexpectedly important and arduous and frightened me much. After the Duchess of Sutherland had changed her Majesty's robe with the help of the dressers I had (in the library, as it is called, a great room adjoining the body of the house), in presence of the whole court and surrounded by all the great officers of State, to unpin and remove from her Majesty's head her diamond diadem, and taking the great Crown of England (weighing twelve pounds) from some grandee (whom I did not see very distinctly) to place it and pin it on with two diamond pins through the velvet and her hair at the back of her head!

"Feel for me! All this I did, however, pretty well. But when I had to do it all over again in reverse, on her Majesty's return, she was in a hurry, and the last pin I could not find the proper place for in the diadem and first ran it against her royal head (upon which she looked up with a comical arch look of entreaty) and then could not put it in at all anywhere. So she went without it. Luckily it was by no means a necessary circumstance."

Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, King of the Belgians, and his wife, who was Princess Charlotte of Wales, visited Windsor, and when they departed Queen Victoria and her ladies accompanied them to Woolwich, and there was quite as much weeping as may be seen among the plain people on the departure of steamers to-day.

And then a sad scene on board the steamer to take last leave. The two young and pretty girls both sobbing over each other and the poor Duchess



Lady Lytton  
FROM A LATER PAINTING BY H. WEIGALL

of Kent hardly able to let go the hand of her brother, old Prince Ferdinand, and the graceful wehmütig manner of the two princesses on their last bow and kissing hands. It was quite throat lumpy. The Queen quitted them at last in the cabins below and went up on deck to return to her boat.

"Old Sir Robert Otway and all the officers of course very fussy to assist her Majesty in getting down 'the ship's tail side.' But no such thing! With

her little face still all swollen with her recent floods of tears she looked up with the greatest spirit and said quite loud and silvery:

"No help, thank you. I am used to this," and got down the ladder like an old boatwain.

"She said afterward to me, 'I was quite glad to find myself in a ship again—the first time since I came to the throne. I do like ships.' I of course said how happy I was to hear a Queen of England

say so. I hope she will go afloat some day."

Queen Victoria became engaged to Prince Albert while Lady Lytton was



## Simple Ways at Windsor Castle—Queen Victoria's Care of Her Husband—A King in Exile

portly forms and finery of the Duchess of Bedford and Lady Normandy, who walked before me, from seeing the Queen and her train bearers at all; and they were said to have formed much the most striking part of the show in their pure and simple white dresses.

"They looked like village girls among all the gorgeous colors and jewels that surrounded them. The Queen's look and manner were very pleasing; her eyes much swollen with tears, but great happiness in her face, and her look of confidence and comfort at the Prince as they walked away as man and wife was very pretty to see.

"I understand she is in extremely high spirits since. Such a new thing for her to dare to be ungarded in conversation with anybody; and with her frank and fearless nature, the restraints she has hitherto been under from one reason or another must have been most painful."

"Prince Albert enjoyed the simple life and the Queen fell into his way of thinking as readily as though she had not been a Queen."

"The Queen shows country tastes by this liking of a really simple country house, where she walks alone with her husband. Called on Lady Gardiner so and was extravagantly delighted because the footpath at the garden gate, having said Lady G. was not at home, added, 'Won't you leave your names?' not having any notion he spoke to the actual Queen and her Lord. The gardener meanwhile had come near and explained; upon which the poor foot-boy took to his heels and it is believed it court encore."

Victoria "fussed" over Albert and was as careful not to worry him as any of her subjects might have been with their common or garden husbands.

"The Prince suddenly flew off coursing on foot, with the three greyhounds, leaving his wife very patiently and happily waiting for him within the slopes a long time, very damp and dark, and Miss Murray getting crusty for fear of a cold; but the Queen as meek and nice as could be. Then at bedtime the Queen, evidently much tired and sleepy, won my heart over again by saying to me, 'Tell Lord Alfred to let the Prince know that it is 11 o'clock' she was at his

lightful! Leading the drive through every beautiful turn, which he knows as he does every tree, and cantering up to point out 'a fine swarm of bees just settling on that bough,' and then some talk about the queen bee and their ways, our Queen listening like a good child and answering, 'How curious,' and asking little questions.

"And then we got to the larger paddock, where his Arabians and their foals and his fine hunters were galloping about, and he brought them up to show her, and she was so worthy! knowing them all by name and seeming to long to get a gallop herself. And then pointing out the magnificent scarlet geraniums seen through the glass of the conservatory, and rather begging the Queen to alight and go in to see them better. She could not, being engaged at the castle by a particular hour, but refused very gracefully and kindly, and I envied for the simple tastes and pleasures and happy active temper and habits of her husband."

Here is an anecdote of the Queen which shows the goodness of her heart as well as her impulsiveness:

"I am sorry and uneasy about Lady Exeter! I went down to the Queen last evening for something and she told me this bad news, and seeing I was a good deal shocked she was so kind! and said directly, 'Oh, but perhaps I am oversteering what is in the letter. You must see the letter! Where is it? Oh, in the Prince's room! I'll go for it.' And tho' of course I deprecated, think of her actually taking her little feet out of a bain de pieds she was taking and putting on any shoes she found, no stockings, and all wet she ran all along her private corridor to the Prince's room to fetch me the letter! Wasn't it nice of her? I felt like a second Lord Rolle."

"As this is a historical day [October 8, 1844] I think I will not be lazy," writes Lady Lytton, "but just write you a word of our event while it is fresh. At 2 o'clock he arrived, this curious King—worth seeing if ever a body was! The Queen having graciously permitted me to be present, I joined the party in the corridor and we waited an hour. Then the Queen of England came out of her room to receive the King of France—the first time in history!

"Her Majesty had not long to wait in the Armory, as she received him in the State apartments, his own private rooms, very civilly. From the Armory, amidst all the old trophies and knights' armour and Nelson's bust and Marlborough's flag and Wellington's, we saw the first of the escort enter the quadrangle and down flew the Queen and we after her, just in time to see the escort clattering up and the carriage close behind.

"The old man was much moved, I think, and his hand rather shook as he alighted, his hat quite off and his gray hair seen. His countenance is striking—much better than the portraits—and his embrace of the Queen was very parental and nice."

In January, 1851, Lady Lytton took her farewell of the court and retired into private life. Here is what she says of her last moments at Windsor, and with this extract I close this interesting correspondence.

"January 18, 1851.—Kitty will tell you every detail of my last moments at Windsor better than I can write them. The last day was unpleasant enough throughout—nothing but good-byes. Then in the evening I was sent for to my last audience in the Queen's own room, and I quite broke down and could hardly speak or hear.

"I remember the Prince's face, and a few words of praise and thanks from them both; but it is all misty, and I had to stop on the private staircase and have my cry out before I could go up again. Then I made all my presents with very full success.

"Yesterday morning, alas! the darlings all came up in succession, and a bad spot of road it was to get through. I dare neither look back nor look forward. Upward, in trembling and fear and humiliation, I can look with something, but not enough of hope and trust for them for whom I undertook so much and have done so little—them whose sins and final doom I have in some sort to answer for, and how? They all cried and were most touching.

"The Prince of Wales, who has seen so little of me lately, cried and seemed to feel most. The Princess Royal said many striking and feeling and clever things, especially on her last visit to me upstairs the night before. Princess Alice's look of soft tenderness I never shall forget; nor Prince Alfred, with his manly face bathed in tears, looking so pretty."

## WALKING ON ALL FOURS MIGHT CURE MANY OF THE ILLS NOW AFFLICTING ALL MANKIND

THE very newest fad is to walk for a time each day on all fours like the beasts of the field. Such exercises are said to be a cure for many ills. So if you should happen to see apparently sane men and women stumbling over their lawns on all fours doing the same stunt in drawing rooms don't think they have gone mad—they are only practising the Klotz cure, which is being taken up by young and old, fat and lean.

It started in Germany. They have been doing this sort of thing over there for over a year, and there is one regular sanitarium where the exercises are given under medical supervision.

And this is the theory. Ernst Klotz, a German biologist, maintains that the upright carriage of man is unnatural and results in many ills. Nature, he says, did not intend it, and since man took to carrying himself erect he has vainly tried to adapt himself to the new conditions.

As a result of his holding himself in a way opposed to nature he suffers from various pathological deformations, from the hypertrophy of various organs, from the displacement of others and from lesions in the blood vessels.

The architecture of man, according to Prof. Klotz, was meant to be the same as that of the other vertebrates. The spinal column was meant to be horizontal and to protect from injury the internal organs and the soft parts of the body, which ought to hang from it. The spinal column is in fact properly the roof tree of a man and fulfils this use in the case of the other mammals.



Walking on All Fours as Prescribed by Dr Klotz



Dr Klotz.



Taking the Klotz Cure.

Man's upright position, concludes the professor, hampers particularly the digestive process. This is owing to the organic displacement which it entails. Hence man suffers from many stomachic maladies from which the less aspiring quadrupeds are free.

Dr. Klotz has found that very few human beings who are past twenty years of age have all their organs in the right place. They have sagged or dropped or wandered to a more or less degree. Especially is this the case with the stomach. Many people are dismally ill and miserable and don't know what is the matter with them and their physicians dose them with medicines and indigestion cures when all the time it is merely a case of dropped stomach. The stomachs of some people are so far out of place as to be down to the groin, while it is uncommon to find a stomach actually in its place, Dr. Klotz declares.

According to the doctor it is easy to replace the stomach if it has not been too extreme in its wanderings, and the way to replace it is by walking on all fours as much as possible. One can't overdo this cure, it seems. And the best of it is that while you are doing the stunt to replace the stomach all the other organs are being benefited as well and heart, lungs, liver and kidneys are all being strengthened and stimulated by the exercises.

It broadens the shoulders, it is declared, develops and beautifies the arms and makes a slim waist.

It is declared that it is amazing what the Klotz cure will do. One only has to try it to discover how efficacious it is, say its advocates.